

Docket No. 500.40566CC3

Appln. No. 10/786,009

July 7, 2006**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings, and all prior versions, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. – 3. (Cancelled).

4. (New) A stirring apparatus comprising:

a vertical cylindrical vessel which is substantially closed;

a partitioning cylinder disposed inside the cylindrical vessel which partitions the cylindrical vessel into inner and outer compartments concentric to a center thereof;

an inlet through which a process solution is supplied into the outer compartment;

an outlet disposed inside the inner compartment through which the process solution is evacuated;

stirring blades disposed in the inner and outer compartments respectively, the stirring blade in the inner compartment stirring a process solution therein and the stirring blade in the outer compartment stirring a process solution therein, each of the stirring blades rotating concentrically around the center of the cylindrical vessel; and

a rotating shaft for the stirring blade of the outer compartment, fixed thereto, which is disposed above the inner compartment inside the cylindrical vessel and whose lower end is located above the inner compartment and is at a location higher than an upper edge of the partitioning cylinder,

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wherein the process solution in the outer compartment enters the inner compartment over the upper edge of the partitioning cylinder in a reaction proceeding by the stirring of the blades.

5. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising a heater disposed inside at least one of the inner and outer compartments which heats the process solution thereinside.

6. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising another outlet disposed inside the cylindrical vessel through which a volatile matter generated during a process inside the inner or outer compartment is evacuated.

7. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising another outlet disposed inside the cylindrical vessel through which a volatile matter generated during a process inside the inner or outer compartment is evacuated.

8. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the stirring blade disposed in the inner compartment is also fixed to said rotating shaft, at a location higher than said upper edge of the partitioning cylinder.

9. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the stirring blade disposed in the inner compartment is also fixed to said rotating shaft, at said lower end of said rotating shaft.

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10. (New) A stirring apparatus comprising:
- a vertical cylindrical vessel which is substantially closed;
 - a compartment inside of which a process solution provided is reacted;
 - an inlet through which the process solution is supplied into the compartment;
 - stirring blades disposed in the compartment which stir a process solution thereinside and rotate around a center of the compartment;
 - a rotating shaft for the stirring blades of the compartment, fixed to the stirring blades, which is disposed above the compartment inside the cylindrical vessel and whose lower end is located above the stirring blades and the process solution, so that the stirring blades disposed in the compartment are disposed without any counterpart rotating shaft at the center in the compartment, around which center the stirring blades rotate.
11. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said blades are attached to said lower end of the rotating shaft.
12. (New) A stirring apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said rotating shaft does not extend into said compartment.